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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: 24 February 1978 Briefing of Senator Richard Stone
(D., Fla.) on the Predicted Reaction in Central
America and the Caribbean Should the U.S. Senate
Not Ratify the Panama Canal Treaties

25X1 1. [] On 24 February 1978 Senator Richard Stone
was briefed on possible Caribbean and Central American
reactions in the event that the U.S. Senate did not ratify
the Panama Canal Treaties. The briefing took place in the
Senator's office (1327 Dirksen Senate Office Building) and
lasted from 0910 until 1020 hours. The briefing was not
monitored []
No transcription was taken. 25X1

25X1 2. [] In addition to the Senator, Gene Parvin and
Barry Schochet, both of the Senator's staff, attended the
breifing. The briefers were: []
25X1 both of ORPA, [] NFAC/CSS, and []
25X1 Office of Legislative Counsel. 25X1

25X1 4. [] The bulk of the briefing session, which was
predominantly on a non-classified level, dealt with possible
reactions in Central America and the Caribbean in the event
that the U.S. Senate were to refuse to ratify the Panama Canal
Treaties. The sense of the area was that all countries would
prefer to see the treaties ratified, that non-ratification
would probably not significantly alter bilateral relationships
with the U.S., but that non-ratification would almost certainly

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cause many if not most of these nations to be less cooperative and indeed more antagonistic in international fora.

He does not believe that the treaties will be turned down but is concerned about what sorts of amendments would have which sorts of effects on the Panamanians. The scenarios explored were:

- a. Non-ratification
- b. Ratification, with military amendments and/or human rights amendments
- c. Ratification, with some economic amendments which would reduce U.S. commitments to pay so much for the transfer

Essentially, the Senator was told that non-ratification would bring about hard-to-predict results. Ratification with amendments which would insist on U.S. military presence after the year 2000 and/or insistence on human rights moves would both go to the heart of internal affairs of Panama and would cause problems which would be hard to control or predict. Relatively minor adjustments in the Treaties would probably be swallowed by Panama and well might not have to go through the process of another plebiscite.

5. ☐ Senator Stone said that he greatly appreciated the briefing, that he now felt that he was in much better command of the critical issues (from the Panamanian point of view) and added that he might ask for the briefers to return at some future date.

Assistant Legislative Counsel

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